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Victoria Street Newz

May 2007

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Vol. 4 No. 2

seeing the would for the trees

TREE SIT ESTABLISHED IN PATH OF BEAR MOUNTAIN INTERCHANGE

Concerned citizens have erected a ‘Tree Sit’ adjacent to the 40-metre-long Langford Lake Cave, at the location of the proposed Bear Mountain Interchange on the Trans-Canada Highway. They are refusing to leave until the City of Langford abandons the controversial highway project.

“We want ethical development now and we oppose the Bear Mountain Interchange,” says Ingmar Lee, a member of the Coalition to Protect Goldstream Watershed. “Bear Mountain has blasted out the first phase of its ‘mountain-top-removal’ development plan with the existing access infrastructure. They now require a second access route to build out Phase 2, or ‘The Son of Bear Mountain.’”

“The massive Bear Mountain project epitomizes the worst sort of crude, unsustainable development,” says Lee. “This hideous example of mountain-top-removal development in the beautiful Highland Hills near Victoria is totally unacceptable. The destruction of ecosystems and increased car travel is unethical at a time of climate change and other catastrophic environmental problems.”

The decision to establish the Tree Sit reflects the lack of transparency about the project. The BC Ministry of Transportation is demanding \$2650 for 7800 pages of documents, requested through a Freedom of Information Request. Residential properties along Leigh Road have been purchased by the City of Langford to make way for the interchange; they are currently being rented on the condition that tenants vacate the premises on two-months notice.

Lee says that the Douglas Fir forest in the vicinity of Langford Lake Cave is festooned with flagging tape, survey stakes and spray-paint, including the entrance to the speleologically significant cave. Lee finds this particularly disturbing in light of the desecration of a sacred cave near the Skirt Mountain summit by the Bear Mountain developers last December.

“This interchange will put more cars on the road, not less, and destroy endangered ecosystems and the Langford Lake Cave,” says Lee. “That’s why we’re committed to stopping it.”

Here’s how you can support this effort:

1. Visit the Tree Sit as often as possible to lend support. The forest, in spite of being blasted by noise from the highway, is remarkably gorgeous, with a great many interesting and beautiful features - huge, spectacular trees, birdlife, trilliums, lillies and calypso orchids, CMTs, Karst caves, wetland bog, nice neighbours. There’s always something going on, it’s an interesting and secure place.
2. Lobby the Province (premier@gov.bc.ca) and City of Langford (250-478-7882) urging them to abandon the project, which will allow more luxury development and mountain-top removal at Bear Mountain, while damaging rare ecosystems in the Goldstream Watershed and putting more cars on the road.
3. Donate \$\$\$ for supplies and also: rope, white tarps, camping supplies, food items
4. Spread the word to family, friends, and co-workers.

Relevant websites:

www.spencerspond.ca
www.firstnations.de/development.htm?06-1-coast-salish-1.htm
www.district.langford.bc.ca/documents/maps/PDF/proposed%20rds.pdf>
www.district.langford.bc.ca/documents/maps/PDF/proposed%20rds.pdf
www.firstnations.de/development.htm?06-1-coast-salish-1.htm
members.crcable.net/pumpkinpatch
www.youtube.com/watch?v=WdK4X8uXuy8

For more information contact the Coalition to Protect Goldstream Watershed:
protectgoldstream@gmail.com / 250-388-3847

Zoe’s Tree-sit Diary - Apr 16 07

by Zoe Blunt

I’m standing at the base of the tree leaning back on my harness and peering at the platform sixty feet above. Ingmar is encouraging me to get up there. The press conference is supposed to start in forty-five minutes and we need to get into position. Ingmar’s fully informed about my slightly spastic condition and I can tell he’s not sure if I can still do this. I give him a thumbs up and start up the rope.

By the time the camera crews arrive, we’re both up on the platform with our feet dangling down. The cameras focus in as Ingmar rappels down the rope. I stay up in the tree. The CH TV guy comes over with a microphone and battery pack and attaches them to the end of the rope. I haul the rope up and clip the mike to my coat collar. The reporter calls her questions up to me and I shout back down at her, forgetting about the mic.

The reporters and cameras finally leave and I’m alone up in the tree. The platform is a pair of four by eight foot plywood sheets reinforced with two by fours. It looks like a raft on the open ocean. Ropes and rigging are everywhere and the white tarps billow in the wind like sails. The plywood planks are not quite level and they creak and sway as I move around.

It’s a two-room platform: one plank is the bedroom, with a tiny tent nailed to it. The other serves as the living room (a folding chair) and kitchen (a camp stove and a pot). The bathroom is a bucket hanging below the tree-sit. Everything is lashed down or clipped in, but things fall overboard anyway: two pens, my lighter, the lid to my thermos.

I’m tied to the tree on a ten-foot leash tethered to my harness that stays on every moment, even when I’m sleeping. The thing wraps itself around my legs every time I turn around and threatens to knock small untethered objects off the platform.

I’m afraid of falling. Everyone is; people are hardwired that way. Even though I have total confidence in the platform and the safety line,



photo: Chris Cook

that giddy feeling comes and goes, especially when I’m moving around close to the edge or getting ready to descend down the rope.

There’s a constant wind up here and the roar of traffic is louder. Through the trees to the south I can just make out a bare knoll and the entrance to the Langford Cave, a 40-meter-long karst cavity that draws cavers from all over the region.

The Songhees First Nation named this place Spaet Mountain. The city of Langford calls it Skirt Mountain. The developer has re-named it Bear Mountain to go along with the marketing of their resort and property sales.

A pileated woodpecker flies into the grove of dead snags next to the platform and lands on a trunk at eye level. It hammers away at the wood for a few moments and then swoops over the trail and up a rotten stump. A hummingbird zips by, flashing green. The forest floor is carpeted with trillium and lilies.

As night falls, the traffic dies down and the frogs start up. The tree sways slightly in the wind and the thrushes sing their evening songs.

(con’t pg 2.)

About Street Newz

“Building Bridges
within our Downtown Community”

Coordinator & Website: Janine Bandcroft
Deliveries: Nancy Raycroft
Distribution: John @ Douglas/Fort St.

The Victoria Street Newz mission is to provide a voice, and income opportunities, for economically marginalized and/or socially disadvantaged people, at the same time offering employable skills training, increased self-esteem, confidence, and pride in accomplishments.

Victoria Street Newz is sold by licensed vendors who sign a code of conduct. They buy the newspaper for \$.50 each, and resell them by donation. We like to encourage a sliding-scale economy which offers people a choice.

You can contribute to social change by supporting the Victoria Street Newz coalition and vendors, by reading information that informs you directly about poverty issues, and by taking action for progressive, peaceful, non-violent change.

Victoria Street Newz welcomes written submissions including interviews, event reviews, cartoons, poetry, photographs, or artwork, but we can’t guarantee everything will be published. We reserve the right to edit, and will not print anything libelous, racist, sexist, or homophobic. Letters sent to the editor are assumed to be for publication, must include phone number or email (if possible, for confirmation) and may be edited for length. You can publish using a pseudonym, or anonymously.

Opinions expressed in this newspaper are not necessarily those of Victoria Street Newz, the editors, advertisers, contributors, readers, or publishers.

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Victoria, B.C.
V8V 3P6**
**or leave a message at
250-383-5144
ext 0137**
streetnewz@islandnet.com
relativenewz.ca

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WE’RE ALL BEGGARS

by Janine Bandcroft

Call it ‘public relations,’ ‘marketing,’ or ‘sales’ - we’re all, essentially, beggars. Some ask for taxes, compensation for work, return on investment, loan or mortgage approvals. Musicians and artists request applause, appreciation, remuneration for their efforts. Panhandlers occupy public sidewalks hoping for tokens of kindness from strangers. Non-profit and charitable organizations are constantly searching for funding, so they can employ people and stay alive.

When I founded this newspaper I’d had a bit of experience in the not-for-profit world. I’d learned that people in that industry spend a lot of time looking for, and writing, grant applications. The search for ‘core funding,’ to maintain the day-to-day operations of any non-profit, is on-going, and frustrating. It’s a bit easier for charities, who are eligible to apply for funding from other charities, and who can offer their supporters tax receipts in exchange for donations. But if you’re just a puny registered non-profit society like the Bread and Roses Collective (Street Newz is a project of the Bread and Roses Collective), then your begging options are rather limited.

Shortly after the newspaper and the non-profit were established in 2004, I applied to the federal government for charitable status, realizing this would make our lives that much easier. We were denied, and in the process I learned that our application was reviewed by a single individual. It didn’t go to a committee, it wasn’t a collective decision - one person, one civil servant, had the power to deny us the opportunity to join the charitable club. I could have appealed her decision, but I didn’t. I decided maybe it’s better not to have a leash, a tether, back to the feds. If we’re going to provide a voice for the people, if we’re going to truly be a free press, then perhaps we’re better off without big daddy’s editorial voice in our heads.

Three years later, with Street Newz in its fourth year of production, we’re confronted with the ‘core funding’ issue. For the past two years we received \$5000 from Vancity, and smaller (but significant) amounts from KAIROS, PSAC, and the City of Victoria. We also collect some subscription and advertising money, and are particularly appreciative of donations. All that’s designated for Street Newz or the Bread and Roses goes into an account and is divvied up by a Board of Directors. They pay me \$700 monthly, in exchange for my efforts putting this paper together each month, plus they buy \$40 worth of bus tickets through the cooperative purchasing plan administered through the Community Council (we get \$80 worth of bus tickets, thanks to the CC and BC Transit), to distribute to vendors and low-income writers).

This year, Vancity denied our grant application. Apparently we’ve collected all the ‘core funding’ that we’re entitled to but a representative suggested we may be eligible for



the ‘Enterprising Non-Profits’ program, which is a collaboration between a group of community minded organizations. I checked the website, and it appears that only registered charities can apply (as is, unfortunately, often the case). My Vancouver based Vancity contact hadn’t returned my call by print time so our opportunities there remain uncertain.

In any event, this is not an appeal for money. I just think you have a right to know what’s going on behind the scenes. And it’s interesting to have some insight into the world of non-profits. As such, we’re not allowed to have external share-holders or investors, neither are we expected to provide them with any dividends in return for their investment (as happens in the private or publicly traded world of business). All our ‘profits’ go back into the non-profit and its project, as is mandated by the Society Act.

Luckily, we’re fiscally prudent - dare I reclaim ‘conservative,’ - and we’ve got enough (\$4284.14) to keep us going for a few months. But I’ve got to find and complete grant applications soon, because it takes several months for funding decisions to be finalized. And the application process is daunting - it’s like a treasure hunt with no necessarily discernible goal. So, if you’re connected to a union with a social justice fund, a credit union with a community charter, or if your charitable organization is one of the brave few who interpret the law liberally and take the 10% risk (as I understand it, 10-20% of charity’s profits can be used to support advocacy and structural change initiatives), then I’d love to hear from you.

I’m not asking for favours. I don’t want special treatment. We’re happy to apply, through a grant intake process, and be considered alongside all the other applications. But if you can help me find those grant application documents, that’ll save me a lot of time searching (searching, not ‘googling,’ which is a corporate trademark - like ‘xerox’ vs. ‘photocopy’) for the elusive grant application treasure.

With the paper off to the printer I’ve got about 2 weeks to catch up with other work (I’ve been publishing short videos to the ‘bandcroft’ account at youtube.com, and podcasting my CFUV radio show at relativenewz.ca) and beg for money before I commence production for next month’s paper. I love this paper, and so do lots of others including the people who offer it to you for a donation (which, thankfully, often covers the actual costs of printing), and I’m optimistic we can keep it alive for a long time yet. I won’t turn it over to advertising, or otherwise compromise its integrity. I believe it’s a valued community service, and I’m confident that somewhere there’s an organization representing a portion of the community that is willing and honoured to help maintain our core. Meantime I’ll continue walking the doggies to subsidize this blessed work and if anyone tells me to ‘get a job’ I’ll tell them I’ve already got one -- I’m just looking for the paycheque to go along with it.

Namaste - the divine energy that resides within me acknowledges the divine energy that resides within you.

Zoe’s Tree Sit Diary -- con’t from pg 1

I crawl into the tiny tent and curl up in my sleeping bag, tugging at the tether every time I turn over. Waking up in the middle of the night, I hear an owl hooting.

Thursday morning I wake up with the sun shining through the trees and a winter wren scolding me nearby. I crawl out of my cocoon, bleary-eyed, and go through the routine of making a pot of tea, taking a shit in the bucket, rolling a cigarette and surveying the forest. I feel wonderful.

People come to visit: local supporters, more journalists, and curious neighbours. Food donations are piling up under a tarp Ingmar tied up for a base camp. The food has to be dealt with because there are raccoons (and possibly bears) in the area, so I haul it up to the platform and make a space in a gear bag for cans of soup, noodles, oatmeal, and cookies.

Cheryl Bryce, the lands manager for the Songhees First Nation, stops by to lend her support and videotape the tree-sit. She’s disturbed that some members of the band council are supporting the development rather than voting to protect the environmental values of their traditional territory. I come down the rope and we chat for a half an hour.

The province and the municipalities have so far failed to provide details of the project’s environmental impacts. A Freedom of Information request was returned earlier this year with a demand for payment of \$2400 for 7800 pages of documents.

The clouds gather and an icy wind picks up. I go to bed early, snuggled down in the bottom of the sleeping bag with an extra fleece blanket.

Friday dawns with threatening clouds. Then a threatening little man with a mustache: the lands manager for the Provincial Capitol Commission. He’s been sent to determine whether I’m on PCC land, and to grumble at me about the commission’s liability if someone gets hurt and sues them. I promise I won’t hurt anybody and I won’t sue anybody. He suggests if I’m trespassing, he may get the police involved. I invite him to the salmon barbecue scheduled for later tonight. He studies me for a minute without responding and then marches off into the forest with his maps in hand.

I don’t know if he’ll call the police, but even if they show up, they won’t be able to arrest me because I’m sixty feet up in a tree. The RCMP in Vancouver has a special climbing team for these kind of situations, but it takes a few days to assemble. I

contemplate the legal implications of criminal trespass charges and court injunctions.

Later: I’m bored, so I use my borrowed cell phone to call the developers’ head office. Bear Mountain Resort and Bear Mountain Properties are the forces behind this project and I figure it’s only polite to introduce myself. But it seems no one is available on this Friday afternoon, not even a receptionist, so I leave a cheery message in the general mailbox describing the wildlife in the area and inviting them all to the salmon barbecue.

The rain holds off, miraculously. At dinnertime, three dozen tree-huggers are gathered around a small campfire devouring barbecued salmon, roasted weiners, mashed potatoes, and bags of fruit and cookies. Mary Vickers, a Nuxalk Nation woman from Bella Bella, provided the salmon, and she gets us all to join hands while she says a prayer to the spirits and the ancestors to bless our work here. Ingmar stands up on a stump and lays out the plan: seven people are needed to take charge of the tree-sit for one day a week. Each person would either sit in the tree for twenty-four hours or find another person to do it. He’ll provide the training.

By Saturday, I’m thoroughly weary of the tiny platform, the harness, and the shit bucket. My legs and arms are shaky from climbing up and down the rope. I’m longing for a hot shower and a soft bed. But still I sit for hours mesmerized, staring out into the forest, listening to the birds, and feeling my senses expand to the limit of hearing and vision.

On Sunday morning, the relief shift arrives. He lives nearby and he has no idea how to climb a tree, but he’s willing to learn and Ingmar’s willing to teach him. I rappel down for the last time. My man Dan is there to give me a ride home.

I don’t want folks to get the idea that I’m some kind of action hero. I’m retired from all that now. This was just a one-time special event – more of a vacation than an action; more of a cameo than a comeback. I joked with the folks watching me climb that I’m living proof: almost anyone can do this shit. And it’s true – the biggest obstacle is conquering the fear of falling, the fear of failing, the fear of powerlessness. The campaign is just now beginning, but folks are digging in for the long haul.

Cheers to the Spaet Mountain defenders!



'Len Barrie' (Bear Mountain 'developer') dashes to claim "Fouling the Trough Award" at the 10th Annual Corporate Golden Piggy Awards at Roxy Theatre, April 1st 2007.

Actor Ken Orchard (right) plays role of recipient; Former Victoria Mayor David Turner (left) plays role of Master of Ceremonies; Rose Henry (middle) plays satirical role of Len Barrie's golf caddie.

Photo: G. T. Wm. Edwards

Other Piggie Award Recipients:

Morguard Investments Town and Country Mall development
Alcan/BC Hydro
Coca Cola
Merck

BLOOD, SEX, CARS & CHRISTIE CLARK

Dictated by Betty Krawczyk from Alouette Correctional Centre for Women in Maple Ridge, BC.

As the *Province* newspaper is about blood, sex, cars and sports, it is not where one looks for balanced news reporting, usually. But the only newspaper that makes its way into the isolated gates of Alouette Prison for Women where I am presently residing, is, you guessed it, the *Province*. Talk about cruel and unusual punishment!

But wait, there is after all the amusement factor. For instance, it's fun to watch Christy Clark morph into a friend of all women (her editorial on the need or quotas in order to get women into politics) and children (her sudden realization that working women need daycare from one of an elitist proponent of two tiered schools and health care systems), but her latest morph into an environment champion (April 8th) is quite stunning.

Will Miss Clark now actually advise Mr. Campbell that he must change his thinking on climate change? That by removing the last of the safeguards that facilitates the destruction of the last of our old growth forest, that he is accelerating climate change? That by destroying the forests he is also destroying our most valuable carbon sinks? That his plans for coal fired plants will increase carbon emissions?

Surely Christie Clark will point out to our Premier that his "greenest games ever" slogan was a cruel joke that killed the life support systems of Eagleridge Bluffs along with courageous Squamish elder Harriet Nahanee. Yes, I will sleep more soundly in my cell tonight, knowing Christy Clark has stepped up the environmental preservation plate, and that her New Consciousness will be showcased by the Province for the next election.



Pears, Greenhouse Gasses and Food Security

By Tre Arrow

Here I am in a cell at the Vancouver Island Regional Corrections Centre, eating soaked organic pumpkin seeds with an organic pear. My heart is filled with gratitude for the healthy food I am blessed with, despite my limited freedom. My heart is also filled with sadness and sympathy for those who go without healthy adequate food every day while we, in North America, this Turtle Island, daily dump into a landfill enough to feed the world.

It is now unequivocally and abundantly clear that humyns (sic) are in fact a huge contributing source to global warming through the mining of fossil fuels and the emission of greenhouse gases. As I embrace the reality of this long-awaited, accepted truth, I ponder reactive thinking and subsequent policy making. I wonder about the concept of "organics," food safety, food security and how this is inextricably connected to, and therefore jeopardized by, the corporate takeover of the world's food production. Is the right to healthy, pure and unadulterated food the next victim of "too little too late" and reactionary government policy, like the pressing global warming issue? Will we realize the importance of these fundamental humyn rights only after the air, soil, water and food supply have been thoroughly contaminated and overrun with corporate perversion?

Many children in North America can recognize dozens, even hundreds, of corporate logos, but are unable to identify any wild edibles from their backyard or nearby forest. We are what we eat! But do you know what you are eating? Are these pumpkin seeds and pear which are swirling around within my body truly organic according to the organic standards mandated by the government? Furthermore, are those standards sufficient for humyn and planetary health? And are they vigilantly enforced? Do you know where the food you ate last night came from and how it was produced? As you stand in the aisles or in front of the produce section in a grocery store, do you take into account, along with the price tag, the beings that may have suffered to make, plant, harvest, ship and package the food you consume?

There are countless distractions and a myriad of advertising strategies which pull us away, and keep us disconnected from the truth behind the price tag and "nice, clean" packaging. Monsanto and Archer Daniel Midland are feeding the world Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). "McGarbage" provides "death on a bun" to parents while brainwashing their children that hamburgers grow in hamburger patches. You can order a mad cow from Wendy's or fried chicken from Kentucky Fried Cruelty flavored with avian flu! Elementary students are eating processed animal parts in their "lunchables" ... if you are not outraged, then you are not paying attention! Companies like Monsanto, corporate grocery chains like Safeway and fast food Restaurant corporations like MacDonald's and the like would have us believe we need them to feed ourselves and survive. What will we do when the lights go out.? When we can't drive (or walk) to the nearest supermarket, how will we acquire our food?

The time is now for proactive, creative, thoughtful and peaceful solutions to this insidious takeover of our basic right to pure, healthy food! We have the undeniable right and power as humyns and citizens to demand healthy, safe

food for everyone on the planet. One of the best ways to ensure your food is nutritious is to grow it yourself and/or harvest it in the wild. Community gardens, local farms and farmer's markets are another excellent source for high quality food. By educating ourselves with the knowledge of wild edibles and medicinals, permaculture, biodynamic farming, etc... We not only save money, we empower ourselves with priceless tools to sever our dependency on corporate enterprise. We have enormous power in the mere act of choosing where we spend our money and focus our energy. Careful, conscientious consumerism, supporting local and independently owned businesses, is something tangible and accessible to all of us. Patronizing businesses which are committed to fair trade (not "free trade"), organic / ethically harvested foods, food free from GMOs, poisonous chemicals / preservatives / artificial fertilizers, etc. ensures not only health for us as humyns, but respect and sustainability for all beings worldwide!

We have the power to transform our lives and the world into a heaven on earth quite simply through our food choices and who or what we patronize!!!

Here's just a small list of some invaluable resources on the power of our food choices:

Some films to check out:

The Corporation (www.thecorporation.com)
An Inconvenient Truth: (www.climatecrisis.net)
Supersize Me (www.supersizeme.com)

Books:

Tom Brown Jr.'s field guides to wild edibles and urban and rural survival

John Robbins:
[The Food Revolution](#)
[A Diet for a New America](#)
[May We All Be Fed](#)

Gabriel Cuttins:
[Conscious Eating](#)
[The Rainbow Food Diet](#)

David Wolf:
[Sunfoods Diet Success System](#)

Frances Moore Lappé:
[Diet For a Small Planet](#)

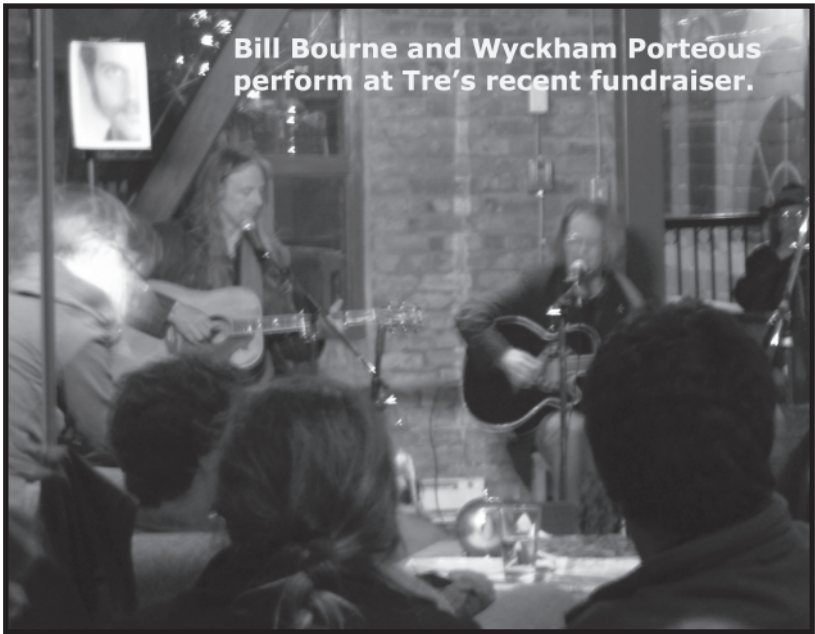
Scott and Helen Nearing:
[The Good Life](#)

Websites:

Percy Schmeiser v. Monsanto:
www.percyschmeiser.com
Rawfoods dot com: www.rawfoods.com
Oxfam International: www.oxfam.org
Lifecycles Food Tree Project in Victoria, BC
www.lifecyclesproject.ca/initi..._tree

Environmentalist and refugee hopeful, Tre Arrow has been incarcerated in Canada since March 2004. "I am innocent of the charges the U.S. government is trying to pin on me. Just As many activists have experienced, I am being targeted by the U.S. government and the FBI, not because I am guilty, but because I have chosen to challenge the status quo."

For more info check the website @ trearrow.org



Bill Bourne and Wyckham Porteous perform at Tre's recent fundraiser.

HOW WRITE TO BETTY OR TRE

Write to Betty:

Betty Krawczyk,
Alouette Correctional Centre for Women
P.O. Box 1000,
Maple Ridge,
BC V2X 3K4

Write to Tre:

Tre Arrow - CS#05850722
Vancouver Island Regional Correction
Centre
4216 Wilkinson
Victoria, BC
V8Z 5B2

**NO ONE IS FREE WHEN
OTHERS ARE OPPRESSED**

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BURNED

by Brian Mason

The buzz was encouraging. It looked to be a book about solutions, something uplifting, maybe even some “good news for a change” in the face of global heating. But reading George Monbiot’s current bestseller, Heat: How to Stop the Planet from Burning, turned out to be rather more like a dunk in the cold pool.

Based on the best available science, Heat concludes that wealthy countries must reduce their carbon emissions by at least 90 per cent by the year 2030 (Canada, because of its profligate carbon emissions habits, is given a higher target of 96 per cent), else run the risk of having major ecosystems collapse, begin to release their stored carbon, and seeing global heating accelerate on its own in a positive feedback loop. (The Kyoto protocol, in comparison, calls for rich countries to make a useless six per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions below 1990 levels by 2012.)

Heat examines whether it is possible to feasibly apply technology to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions, mostly carbon dioxide, of a rich nation (Great Britain) to meet the 90 per cent target. By feasible, Monbiot means affordable both in terms of money and life-style disruption. He looks at electricity generation and consumption, house construction, heating for homes and businesses, ground transportation, air travel, retail shopping and other common dimensions of everyday living – as well as, surprisingly, cement manufacture, a major greenhouse gas emitter.

In all likelihood, the technology and funding exist for rich nations to achieve the necessary reduction in time in all categories, save for jet travel, though it would require extraordinary degrees of effort, focus and collaboration to get there. Or so concludes Heat. But if this be a book about solutions, I don’t see how a doomsday manual could be different.

Like so many other global heating manifestos (including Al Gore’s *An Inconvenient Truth*), this one breaks down in the doing. The nature, scope and scale of the climate change problem; the impracticality of getting the rich nations to work together (let alone the political parties or factions in any one of them or the rest of the world’s countries to cooperate; China, for instance, is forecast to overtake the USA by 2008 as the world’s largest emitter of greenhouse gases); the looming deadline; and the inertia of our species in the face of an unimaginable challenge whose solutions require radical, even transformative changes in human societies all conspire to foretell failure.

Some consider past technical achievements as analogous to dealing with global heating. If the allied countries during the Second World War, for example, could quickly retool to produce tanks, ships and planes in factories which only a short time before had churned out automobiles and washing machines, then we can just as quickly retool for a low-carbon economy. David Suzuki, in a more science-based comparison, likes to relate how speedily the USA surpassed the evil Russians in the race to dominate space and land a man on the moon. As if turning back global heating were as simple as going to war – an endeavour, by the way, at which we have learned to excel over several millennia – or blasting off in a rocket. The trouble with analogies, especially stretched ones, is that they rarely hold.

Besides, a technology-based solutions approach almost completely misses the point and, in the past, has usually ended up creating worse problems for our planet. Do you really want to see every piece of

countryside covered with those immense, clinical-white wind turbines?

Consider the following case. The availability of cheap, plentiful fossil-fuel energy (coal and oil) has allowed three widely used, heavily polluting technologies to remain essentially unchanged since the early days of their invention: the internal combustion engine, the gas turbine jet propulsion engine and coal-fired power plant boilers. In other words, cars, trucks, jet planes and electricity: Together they power our complex societies and account for most of our greenhouse gas emissions. They have, in other words, lubricated the party over the past one hundred years. However, it would make our situation far worse if we now tried to “improve” these technologies; that approach would only perpetuate our unwise, wasteful way of life. They need to be abandoned.

At bottom, it’s been our attitudes and values that have enabled us to effectively ruin the biosphere in only half a dozen human generations. Embodied in our cultural, political and economic systems, they’ve allowed us to think we are technological gods and lord of all creation. Heat devotes barely five pages to these issues, from which readers should infer that Monbiot – a leading popular writer of the Left – doesn’t really believe we can succeed in our efforts to forestall the effects of global heating.

Manifestos like Heat, unfortunately, all end with a whimper, with a call to change your light bulbs and write your politicians to urge action. Politicians, we are led to believe, simply follow public opinion. Just give them an earful, and global heating will soon be in swift retreat. It’s a colossal delusion.

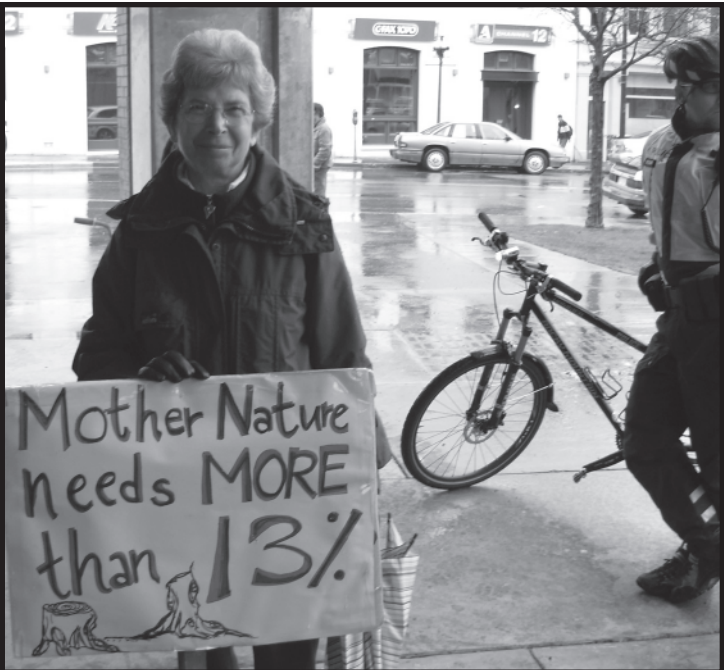
Our political systems are neither developed nor evolved to deal with a problem like global heating. They are not up to the task. They pretend nothing is seriously wrong and try to carry on much as before. As Stephen Lewis has sadly observed, governments at times like this “move from inertia to paralysis.”

Moreover, capitalism, the world’s dominant economic system, is underwriting the entire disaster; this hydra of efficiency and growth is consuming the planet. Throw in the burden of 6.6 billion humans organized into about 200 separate, often warring or quarreling nation-states and – well, you fill in the rest of the sentence. No world government or social movement is poised to save us from this self-inflicted crisis. It’s been dubbed the long emergency, and it’s going to be all that, at least.

Whom, then, can we scapegoat? Not even George Bush can be especially pilloried for our current predicament. Monbiot gets this part of the analysis right. “We are simply too comfortable,” he writes, “and we have too much to lose.” We enjoy the soft living; we want our politicians both to try and to fail, so we don’t have to change our lives.

Where to go, what to do? No alternative readily presents itself, nor is one easily imaginable. It’s like being on a sinking ship with no lifeboats in the middle of a vast and threatening sea; there may be calls to abandon ship, or even to turn it around, but as neither choice seems palatable let alone helpful, most passengers remain on-board. People simply do not turn their backs on a sociopolitical system, no matter how dysfunctional it may be, unless there is another one to move to. Political revolutions, traditionally, have bridged this gap. In truth, no one knows what to do, though don’t forget to change your light bulbs.

Submitted by Brian Mason, a writer, philosopher and downtrodden activist living in James Bay.



On Saturday March 24th, about 250 people braved torrential rains to march and rally to “save the old-growth, carefully log the second-growth, and ban raw log exports!” You can sign the petition at www.viforest.org.

Federal Policies Affecting Women’s Equality: Reality Check

By Marika Morris

In 2006, the federal government made a number of important changes affecting women’s equality provisions. In addition to cutbacks, the elimination of some programs and changes to others, some government equality commitments to action were stalled or reversed. The justifications for these measures were that women are strong, already equal, and don’t need these policy supports. Although we have equality rights on paper, we need to do much more work to make these equality rights a reality for all women in Canada.

Economic Inequality

Facts:

- * At every level of education, women in Canada earn less on average than men. For example, in 2003, women who are high school graduates earned 71.0 % of what male high school graduates earned for full-time, full-year work. Women with post-secondary degrees earned 68.9% of what their male counterparts did for full-time, full-year work. Postsecondary education does nothing at all to narrow the wage gap between women and men.

- * With student debt increasing and continued proposals of income contingent repayment loans, students with lower incomes after graduation (the majority of whom are women) may take much longer to pay off their student loans, and as a result pay more interest,

- * In terms of the ratio of male to female earned income (the wage gap), Canada ranks 38th in the world. The following countries are among the many with less of a wage gap between women and men than Canada: Switzerland, Cambodia, Kenya, the Czech Republic and over 30 others.

Current government policy:

- * On Sept. 18, 2006, responded “no” to the recommendations of a multiyear federal Task Force on Pay Equity, as part of its response to the all-party House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women’s endorsement of the pay equity recommendations.

- * On Sept. 18, 2006, responded “no” to the EI maternity/parental leave recommendations of the all-party House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women. The committee recommended broadening EI maternity and parental leave coverage to include self-employed workers, and eliminating the two-week waiting period.

- * Took all mention of “equality” out of the terms and conditions of the Women’s Program and changed the rules so that women’s organizations can no longer use federal funds to advocate for women’s equality, including pressing for changes that will recognize the value and contribution women make to the paid workplace and in the home.

- * According to the 1984 Royal Commission on Equality in Employment, “child care is the ramp that provides equal access to the workforce for mothers.” Twenty-two years later, that ramp has yet to be built.

November 2006 - <http://statusreport.ca/?q=node/85>



Albo Jeavons (art, left, titled “Business As Usual”) enjoys “working and playing in Philadelphia’s lively anarchist community; figuring out how to use my creativity to help in the struggle for a better, more just world.”

Your thoughts and opinions matter. Want some help writing them?

James Rowe, a grad student in political science from the University of California, Santa Cruz, will be available every Thursday from 1-2:30 pm at Our Place to converse about the writing process with any interested Street Newz or other writers. He will happily edit pieces, or simply shoot the breeze about the joys and frustrations of writing our world. Any conversations writers would like to have, he would love to be party to. Writing is usually for an audience, and yet the process can be isolating and alienating. This time/space is intended to bring some sociability and support to the writing process. James can be identified by the large red knapsack he always has with him.

Further Musings on Canada's Role in Afghanistan

by Don Startin

In our last article we digressed from the history of the conflict, and discussed the problem of what should be done with prisoners captured by Canadian troops. This issue is likely to dog the federal government until further notice, just as the deployment of our forces in the Kandahar area will.

At present all the pundits writing for the *Times Colonist*, and speaking on "The Current," which is the CBC's morning talk show, seem to agree that we are looking at an indefinite deployment.

Back to history! In 1992 the Mujahidin ousted the left wing government which had been abandoned by their Russian supporters, and occupied Kabul where they set up a new government based on the Afghan Interim Government established in Peshawar, Pakistan, in 1988 by fifteen Mujahidin groups.

During the fighting between the soviets and the Mujahidin thousands of Afghan refugees fled to Pakistan where they lived in very difficult conditions around Peshawar. It was in these camps that the Taliban emerged as a force to be reckoned with. The word "taliban" can be translated as "student of religion," and its use came about because many Koranic schools were set up in the camps. In Koranic schools the students are strictly segregated by sex. Males go to one school, females to another. The language taught is Arabic,



and most of the instruction is devoted to studying the Koran, and its implications for personal living, also and very important, its instructions for setting up and operating Islamic states.

Some of the Mullahs directing these schools were from the Wahabi Sect. The Wahabis are a very puritanical sect which evolved in Islam's Holy Land of Saudi Arabia. They are very strict about how men and women dress and deport themselves in public. In the refugee camps of northern Pakistan the Mullahs set up a system of "religious enforcers" who imposed a virtual state within a state on the refugees. The women and girls who attended or taught in these schools found them very grim and restrictive compared to their pre-war schools in Kabul and other large centres. The young men and boys were trained to arms, and it

was from these well disciplined and fanatic recruits that the Taliban was able to forge a modest army. Constant guerrilla warfare with the Russian Army enabled them to hone a cohesive organization and give their soldiers combat experience.

Between 1992 and 1994 power struggles developed between the Mujahidin groups which took the form of all out civil war. Kabul, severely damaged prior to 1992 was pretty well trashed by 1996. There were no services, no schools and the roads were blocked in many places and in hideous disrepair. The countryside was infested with landmines. Besides the 200,000 refugees in Pakistan 30,000 internally displaced people were subsisting in the refugee camps of Nangahar Province.

In 1994 the Taliban emerged as an effective army and declared they would establish an Islamic State. This they proceeded to do, and by 1996 had pushed what was left of the Northern Alliance into the northern provinces of the country. In the parts of the country they controlled, they established the world's most doctrinaire Islamic state.

Women were not permitted to work, except in the home, and had to be accompanied by their father, son, or husband when leaving the home. When away from home women had to wear burkas. Burkas envelope the wearer from head to foot and have an eye slit so the wearer can see where they are going. As a result, thousands of women became prisoners in their own homes because they had no male relatives to escort them out. Men had to grow beards of a certain length, and music and dancing were more or less outlawed.

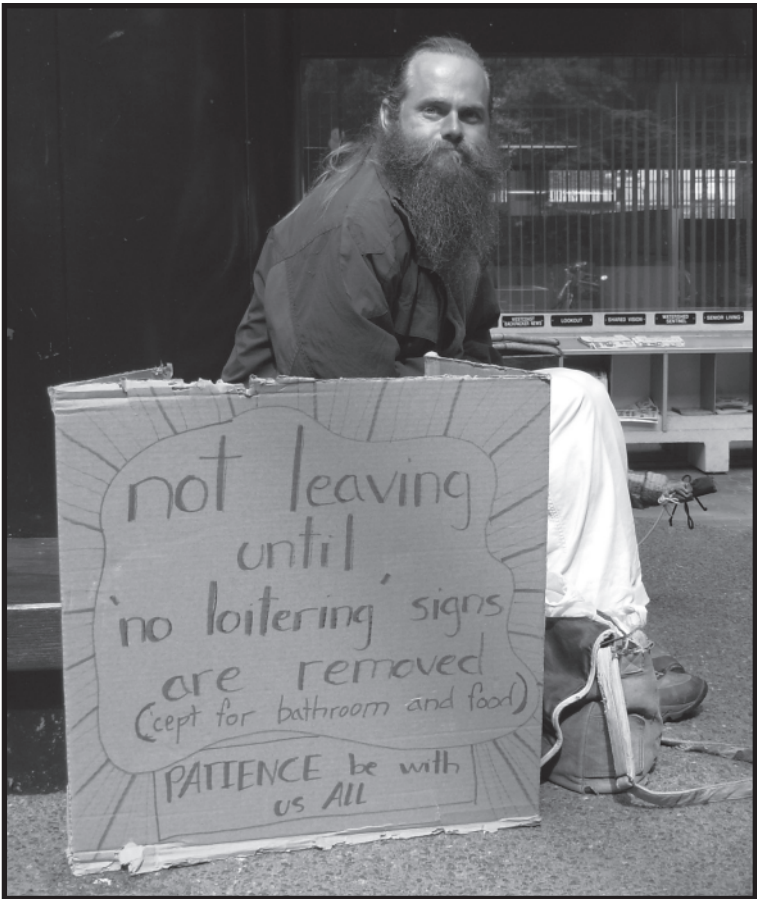
The law and order established by the Taliban were at first welcomed by the people, but their harsh rule soon caused much resentment and enhanced support for the Northern Alliance who kept up the struggle until 2001 when the US invaded the hapless country, causing yet more bloodshed and damage.

In my next article we will deal with the American invasion and the events leading up to it.

Don Startin is an activist and gardener, an ex-military man who has done many things since leaving the army. Don currently lives a life of simplicity with his wife in Victoria, B.C.

[as we go to print Canada's gov't has invested over \$5 billion, and 53 Canadians, on the Afghan invasion.]

PROTECTING OUR COLLECTIVE FREEDOMS



by David Arthur Johnston - Hatrackman@Gmail.com
www.angelfire.com/apes/hatrackman

A growing number of people are beginning to understand that, not only is capitalism the antithesis of freedom, but it is also killing everything as well.

The police protect the sanctity of private property while condemning any who oppose because they are 'just too lazy to get jobs.' Loitering suggests purposelessness. Who is anyone to say that someone else doesn't have a purpose?

In the name of cleaning the streets the city is promoting an across-the-board malevolent prejudice against outside people, whether they be involved in 'crime' or not. It seems backpacks now glean the same attention that shopping carts do - apparently, capitalist forces are cracking down on anyone who doesn't want to sell the whole of themselves.

The problem is not the outside people, the problem is that people think they are allowed to be devilish to secure their financial positions. The question the people of Victoria have to ask themselves is 'What is freedom?' Then maybe we can start dealing with real issues.

Security guards and cops practice intimidation techniques because they only have mastery of violence and know how to control it. If their victims knew the truth they would understand that the cops just think they are doing their jobs and are really not as angry as they pretend to be... then we wouldn't be caught in the trap of anger and would better be able to face this delusional fascism that is making this city reek.

[After establishing a 24 hour vigil in the library courtyard, refusing to leave until the 'no loitering' signs be removed] Sarah and I were both charged with- 'Assault by Trespass' and 'Trespass on enclosed land or premises, engaging in a prohibited activity' and 'Failing to leave or stop engaging in a prohibited activity.' The last two are from the Safe Streets Act and Trespass Amendment Act of BC... the cop was excited about them because we were the first charged with them (he had to look them up). We are to go in front of a judge on June 7th. The only other condition is to refrain from going within a one block radius of 940 Blanshard St. (the Waddington Building which houses the library and provincial and municipal offices)... to note- the 'public/private partnership' is a teaming of the library and the corporations of the town and province and then they hire a private management firm to watch over the privately owned public corporations.

I have much respect for those who do not pay taxes.

The high price of covering one's ass

The pastor entered his donkey in a race and it won.

The pastor was so pleased with the donkey that he entered it in another race and it won again.

The local paper read:

PASTOR'S ASS OUT FRONT.

The Bishop was so upset with this kind of publicity that he ordered the pastor not to enter the donkey in any more races.

The next day the local paper headline read:

BISHOP SCRATCHES THE PASTOR'S ASS.

This was too much for the Bishop, so he ordered the pastor to get rid of the donkey.

The pastor decided to give it to a nun in a nearby convent.

The local paper, hearing of the news, posted the following headline:

NUN HAS THE BEST ASS IN TOWN.

The Bishop fainted.

He informed the nun that she would have to get rid of the donkey so she sold it to a farmer for \$10.

The next day the headlines read:

NUN SELLS ASS FOR \$10.

This was too much for the Bishop, so he ordered the nun to buy back the donkey and lead it to the high plains where it could run free.

The next day the headlines read:

NUN ANNOUNCES HER ASS IS WILD AND FREE.

Alas ... The Bishop was buried the next day.

MORAL OF THE STORY???

Being concerned about public opinion can bring you much grief and misery and even shorten your life.

So, be yourself and enjoy life. Stop worrying about everyone else's ass and you'll live longer.

Don't forget, Christ entered Jerusalem on his ass and got it crucified.

(Thanks to Nadhia for forwarding this!)

DRIVING THE RIFF-RAFF

by C. L. Cook

The peril of our current reality occurred suddenly to me the other night, revealed, as Shakespeare said many truths often are, in jest; the terminal fate of the human race could not have been made more clear.

* Witness: the University bus exchange - Victoria - night. Waiting to board the perennially overcrowded University bus, (the under-serviced situation there too a symptom of our collective undoing), I saw three bus drivers shooting the breeze, while laying over. Our driver “Dan,” as he later identified himself, turned to his fellows and said; “Well, time to go drive the riff-raff.”

That would be me, and my fellow sardine-like packed transit passengers.

Whether Dan considers himself to be another of the “riff raff” I don’t know, but I expect, while he’s wearing the uniform of his occupation, he considers himself one of US rather than THEM, the passengers whom’s safety and service he is charged to maintain. Of course, Dan is, in the eyes of others wearing other uniforms, one of THEM; riff raff, hoi polloi, a lowly “civvie” to be denigrated, disregarded; someone whose societal relevance is to be dismissed out of hand: a nobody.

* Witness: a city bus - Victoria - day. On a blustery, late winter’s morning, a near empty bus approaches a bus shelter, near empty too, but for a ragged old man, his chin on his chest, snoozing. The driver pulls up to the shelter, opens the door, and shouts at the elder; “Clear off!”

My friend tells me; “No-one rang for the bus to stop, and nobody was getting on. He [the bus driver] just took it on himself to hassle this poor old guy, one of the real survivors.” And off the man shuffled, his bundled rags pulled in tow.

* Witness: a city sidestreet, piled high with snow - Victoria - night. The sidewalks impassable, an elderly woman picks her way carefully along the street, gingerly following the automobile ruts. A Victoria City police van comes up behind. The window rolls down, and the head of a young constable emerges. He bawls at the woman; “Get outta the road!” and splashes on past.

There are doubtless many more examples, many I’m certain you’ve witnessed yourself: Bicycle police downtown pushing around the homeless for the crime of their poverty; shopkeepers abusing youngsters for the fault of their youth; automobile drivers abusing everyone for the sin of slowing their progress. It’s all indicative of a growing incivility, directed downwards towards those deemed socially inferior, and therefore fair game for petty tyranny. I believe, this deterioration in the fabric of public life isn’t merely a local phenomenon, but a trend dropped from the heights of what’s left of western civilization upon the heads of its neo-peons.

Witness: a television - anywhere - anytime. The walls of the room are blue hued behind the viewer. On the screen, chaos; a city is drowning, desperate people wave make-shift flags, surrendered to the situation, begging for help. But help isn’t quick to arrive. The people are left to their own devices - sink or swim.

I watched as the hurricane approached. I saw what Katrina [sic] did to Florida, and I heard what the veterans of storms past said about “Little Andrew.” I watched as the storm slowly turned into the

Gulf, the Gulf grown unnaturally warm. I watched that Gulf feed that storm, and I followed it’s inexorable progress toward the doomed city. And I watched the people of that city abandoned to the waters.

Witness: a television - anywhere - all the time. The walls of the room are blue hued behind the viewer. On the screen, chaos; a city is burning, desperate people wail and wave make-shift flags, surrendered to the situation, begging for help. But no help will arrive; those sent know only how to start fires, not stop them.

I watched as the wars approached. I saw what George Bush did to Iraq, and I heard what the veterans of Desert Storm said about their “splendid little war.” I watched as that storm turned slowly into Gulf War Syndrome, an unnatural pollution of the gene pool. And I followed the inexorable succession of a second George, and watched as he approached the doomed city, and I saw the people of that city abandoned to the flames.

Writing of “the day that changed everything,” Victoria novelist, Hal Sisson, in the “dedication” section of his ‘Modus Operandi 9/11’ says; “[U]ntutored emotions of ignorant people are the material that enables evil deeds; and when I have shuffled off this mortal coil I want to leave concrete proof that I was not one of the willfully blind or deliberately ignorant persons unwilling to question the ridiculous government story of what happened on 9/11; unable to entertain the irrefutable evidence of the administration’s complicity and participation in the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.”

Is it too much to believe a government would sacrifice a few thousands of “its own people” to profit its benefactors? How could it seem incredible, when thousands die daily due to the cancerous by-products of an industrial society gone off the tracks? How could it seem absurd that a system routinely disposing of hundreds of millions to a life of want, and suffering, and penal servitude would flinch at a few thousands of souls thrown into the crucible of their infernal greed?

The abrogation of civic responsibility, as we see today in both global polity and local policy, are the twin disasters spelling the end of us all. And if that sounds too incredible, consider what we collectively countenance with our silence as humanity’s epitaph; again, taken from Hal Sisson’s dedication.

“The major incredible international crime perpetrated by the world’s bully was the use of radioactively contaminated depleted uranium 238, that is spreading through Iraq, Afghanistan, other neighboring countries and the world, via dust storms and global air currents, and becomes deposited in human bones, causing cancer and congenital anomalies. If the U.S. administration is allowed to use nuclear weapons on Iran, then mutually assured destruction and annihilation becomes only a matter of time.”

I’m watching as that storm approaches.

(“*” denotes incidents occurring right here in genteel Victoria that I’m personally acquainted with. Quotes are from the dedication in ‘Modus Operandi 9/11’ by Hal Sisson.)

Chris Cook is a contributing editor to Pacific Free Press (pacificfreepress.com). He also hosts Gorilla Radio (gorillaradioblog.blogspot.com), broad/webcast Mondays 5-6 pm from CFUV Radio, Victoria (cfuv.uvic.ca).

Hungry, Homeless, and Hurting

by Kathy Kossen

Hungry, homeless, and hurting are only a few adverbs that describe the many, many people that this statement encompasses. It has become like the cancer of society, both here in Victoria, across our nation, continent and in fact our entire planet.

Myriads of men, women and children left discarded, ignored and abandoned, left to survive with whatever devices, if any, they can forage out of their lostness. This societal cancer is spreading and growing, crushing whoever it touches, no matter how hard they struggle to survive, no matter how many government/bureaucratic agencies render a few leftover crumbs to those with their hands held out for HELP.

Jumping through the eternity of hoops for assistance be that with housing/shelter, food, or employment re-training, to obtain even the smallest amount of basic necessities, has become one which produces humility, shame, guilt, while promoting the vicious circle of dehumanizing and hopelessness.

A few years ago I sent a long, fact ridden appeal to our government leaders asking for examination of programs and motives which our poorest are subjected to. A reply came many months later, stating the usual rhetoric – “thank you”, “we are considering”, “we will propose,” blah, blah, blah. It struck me that I did not have the key to unlock those golden closed doors of bureaucracy, as many before and many after me have tried to open.

So turning it around to take a look from a different angle, I realized that by involving myself, looking inside of me and finding something that I could do, no matter how small, became a clue to a bigger solution. Speaking to family and friends who agreed, we took the matter from words and talk to putting it into actions and with this group of people, C.A.R.T.S. (Christian Actions Reflecting the Spirit) came into being.

Our little carts have been rolling through the streets of downtown Victoria now for 4 years, giving out wonderful food and warm donated clothing – reaching individuals wherever they are on the street, in doorways,

at the shelters, or on the street corner. This however, is not the biggest gift that people out there cherish, it’s the compassion and love that goes back and forth between people, it’s the caring and embracing the lives and needs of others. It’s the chatter, good news, bad news, the “hello’s, bless you’s”, that is the GIFT. The wonderful gift of touching a brother or sister in a magical moment of nonjudgmental common ground with one another. The gift that is, once experienced, has changed lives – volunteers and street family both.

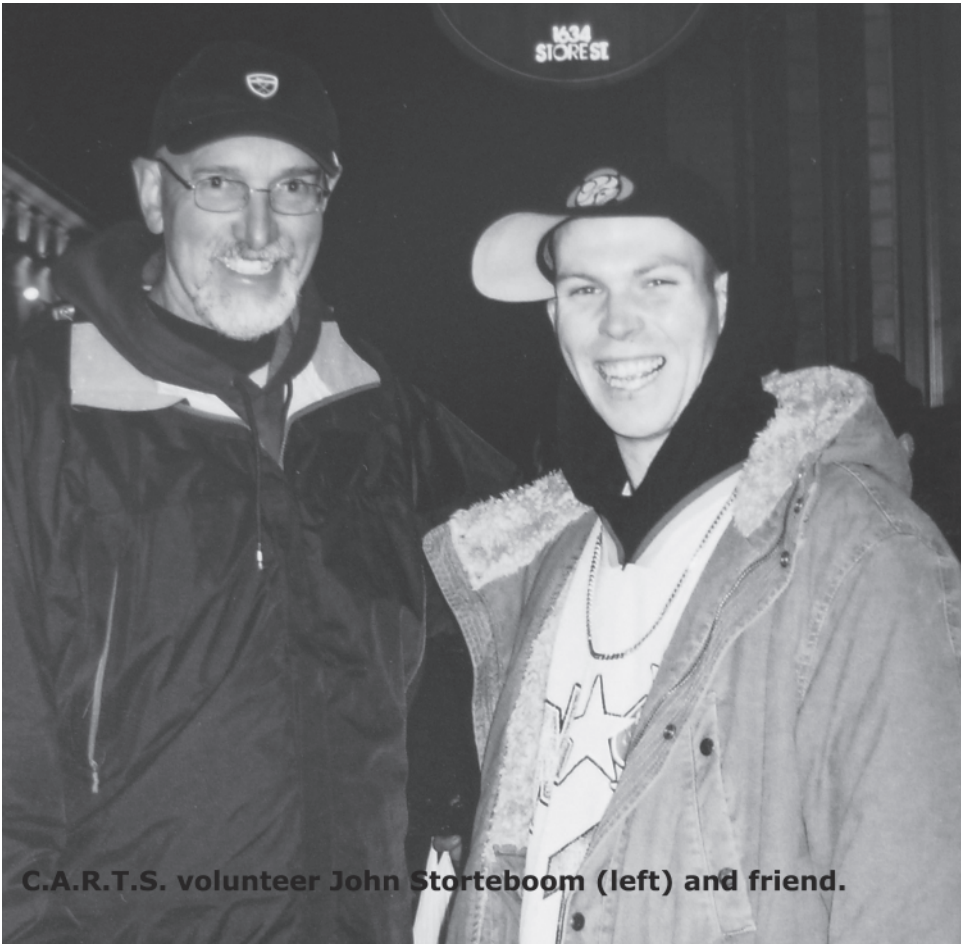
The urgency, brokenness and hauntingly dark needs brings to mind that I live only a heartbeat away from the sidewalk, plodding along with my shopping cart, head held low, waiting to reach the next garbage can for perhaps a few bottles to cash in, waiting for Our Place to open, waiting for CARTS to come along.

I implore you searching readers, that we open our hearts, feel the hurts and fears of our brothers and sisters, let those twinges of compassion that are felt in our gut, come to life – reach out, extend your hand to someone who may be your child, your parent, or even yourself. Laying aside the judgement calls of “they should” or “why don’t they,” and look to a newer vision of “I’m going to” or “that person/family needs a helping hand,” what a difference it would make to not just our community, but to our own spirit.

The joy that comes from giving, stretching a bit further to help is something that cannot be compared to anything we can imagine. Just do it and see what a lift your heart feels – you have discovered the real and true meaning of life – giving, expecting nothing in return, just for the love of it. This more than ever, is what society and our world needs right now.

Asking myself can I help turn this sadness and neediness around? How can I be of service to my fellow man? Can I make a difference in any way? – YES, I can? Am I “just another bleeding heart”? – you bet, and happy to be as it tells me that hearts are still beating and they can feel the hurts of others.

You can write to Kathy at cartsvictoria@yahoo.ca



C.A.R.T.S. volunteer John Storteboom (left) and friend.

Need Legal Assistance??

Access Justice - Volunteer lawyers offer advice on civil matters: Wednesdays 2-4 pm, 386-8521 and Thursdays noon-2 pm, 388-4728.

Legal Services Society - If you’re low income and can’t afford a lawyer. # 200 – 747 Fort Street Victoria, BC V8W 3E9 (250) 388-4516, www.lss.bc.ca -- Mon to Fri - 9:00 am to 12:30 pm

UVic’s Law Centre - Free legal representation if you qualify for legal assistance. Interviews: Mon - Fri: 9:30 am - noon; 1:15 pm - 3:30 pm Call for Appt: 385-1221 Info: thelawcentre.ca

Left Coast Happenings

Street Newz offers no guarantee that this info is accurate, or that the events will actually occur. Full events list published weekly at relativenewz.ca.

Mondays	Movie Monday - 6:30 pm, Eric Martin Pavilion (1900 block Fort St. by donation 595-FLIC or www.islandnet.com/mm
Alt Mondays	Victoria Peace Coalition - 7:30 pm, dolcla@islandnet.com
Tuesdays	Voice of Palestine - 8-9 pm (PST) on 102.7FM. Listen live at http://www.coopradio.org/listen , archives in Audio Clips.
Tuesdays	Vic Bluegrass Assoc Jams 1620 Fernwood, Orange Hall, 7:30 pm 472-6483 free for listeners, \$2 for players - all levels
Tuesdays	Hand Drumming Drop-in, \$10. Beg: 7-8 pm, Adv: 8:15-9:15 pm 521 Superior Info 386-1054 Drums provided.
2nd Tuesdays	Green Drinks - Queen Mother Waterside Cafe, 407 Swift St 5-7 pm. Info: www.qmwaterside.ca or www.greendrinks.org
Wednesdays	Falun Gong faluninfo.net . Fernwood Community Centre, 1240 Gladstone 5-7 p.m. Info: (250)995-1494 free
Wednesdays	Peace Vigils @ the Legislature , noon - 1 pm, except 1st Wednesdays @7 pm - Imagine: War Never Again 477-1944
Wednesdays	Recreational Drum Circle - 7pm, Dwntwn Community Act Ctr, 755 Pandora Free, Drums provided, all levels. 383-0076
Wednesdays	SOLID (Society of Living Intravenous Drugusers) except welfare day, 7-9 pm, 1947 Cook St. \$3 bus fare reimbursed
Wednesdays	Integrative Health Forum: INFORM yourself about health, 7-8pm, Free, 229, 560 Johnson-Market Square www.pacificrimcollege.ca
Wednesdays	Committee to End All Homelessness 7-9 pm, Silver Threads on Fort St. near Fisgard - victoria@communitysolidarity.org , 812-1099
3rd Wednesdays	Communities Solidarity Coalition - Activist Social - 5th St. Bar & Grill, Quadra & Hillside, 5 pm. Info - 480-0533
2nd Thursdays	South Island Health Coalition meetings 2 pm, BCGEU Building, 2994 Douglas St., 381-0033
Fridays	Coffeehouse discussion group 7:30 pm JJ's coffeehouse in Brentwood Bay 7:30 pm Info: sue_stroud@hotmail.com
Fourth Fridays	Café Simpatico, Activist coffeehouse , 1923 Fernwood. Doors at 7 pm. casc@telus.net , 598-7690, communitypipe.org
Last Fridays	Propel Yourself! Victoria Critical Mass Bike Rides - Centennial Square, 5 pm. bring bike, board, helmet, lights, bliss.
Sat Mornings	Sikh meditation -all welcome 6-7 am, Gurdwara Singh Sabha Society (470 Cecelia Rd) Info: jindi@hotmail.com
Saturdays	Neighbourhood Plastic Recycling - soft & hard plastics, and styrofoam 382-4604, www.pacificmobiledepots.com
Saturdays	Tour Merve Wilkinson's Wildwood Forest , Ladysmith Info: Jay, 250-245-5540, www.ecoforestry.ca/WildwoodMap.htm
4th Saturdays	Soft Plastic Recycling —Carnarvon Pk, Oak Bay, 930-1230 pm, 370-7736, oakgreen@telus.net , www.pacificmobiledepots.com
Sat & Sun	Falun Gong faluninfo.net 10-noon, Beacon Hill Pk, across from petting zoo, all winter. 250-995-1494 free
Alt. Sundays	Sierra Club Nature Outings - Call Nikko for more details at 386-5255 x241, www.sierraclub.ca/bc
Sundays	Victoria Folk Music Society 7:30pm, Norway House, 1110 Hillside www.pacificcoast.net/~vfms or 413-3213, 24 hrs
Sundays	Immigrant Youth (12-18) Group @ ICA - 930 Balmoral, 1-3 pm 388-4728 or youth@icavictoria.org
Sundays	Join Victoria's Food Not Bombs and prepare, cook, and/or clean-up on Sundays (see pg 7) 383-5144 extension 1940
4th Sundays	Council of Canadians Coffee Nights 6:30-8:30 pm, Black Stilt Café, 103-1633 Hillside Ave. Info: 220-5355
Monthly	Faith in Action -a multi-faith coalition working to put more heart into BC's income assistance. www.bcfaithinaction.ca
Monthly	Vancouver Island Vegetarian Associaton (VIVA) Potlucks www.islandveg.com
All month	CRD Parks outings and explorations for all ages. 478-3344 www.crd.bc.ca/parks/brochure2.htm
Ongoing	Auditions for Spilt Milk Improv Comedy Troupe 479-3374, spiltmilk@centralmail.com , www.spiltmilkcomedy.com
Apr 26/27th	Our Daily Bread - Film Screening and Discussion - UVic's HSD A240, \$5-10, Info: 721.8629
Fri Apr 27th	Café Simpatico - Africa: The World Social Forum and Beyond 8 pm, 1923 Fernwood Rd., by donation
Sat Apr 28th	Common Vision, Common Action - Shaping Municipal Policy in the CRD 10-3, UVic's David Strong Bldg. Reg: 250.721.8629 or vipirg@vipirg.ca
Sun Apr 29th	Victoria Secular Humanist Association presents Dr. Loren Williams, Swans Collard Rm, 10:30 am, free
Apr 30th/May 1st	Everyday=Earth Day Films-The Great Warming & Homeland: 4 Portraits of Native Action 7pm, Hermann's, 753 View \$5-10 res: opencinema.ca
May 1-10th	The Gulf Islands Film & Television School - 10 day Media Production Program for Activists Info: www.GIFTSfilms.com , 1.800.813.9993
Weds May 2nd	Can You STAND the Silence? - Benefit Dinner for Darfur @ Lambrick Pk School, 6 pm, \$30. Info: akanat@shaw.ca
May 2-6th	Intrepid Theatre: FAMOUS PUPPET DEATH SCENES - @ the Metro Studio, 1411 Quadra (@ Johnson) intrepidtheatre.com , (250)383-2663
Thurs May 3rd	Gold & Greed vs. Community Needs: Cdn Mining Companies in Central America & Turtle Island - UVic Harry Hickman 105, 7 pm, 721-8629
Sat May 5th	Organic Market and Fair Trade Fair - Videa & Moss St. Market, 1330 Fairfield Rd. Info: www.videa.ca 250-385-2333
Sat, May 5th	Victoria School of writing -- SHIFT: LITERARY EXPLORATIONS , 7-10 pm, Open Space (510 Fort St.) Info: 595-3000
Sat May 5th	Walk A Mile In Her Shoes - organized by Women's Sexual Assault Centre. Info: walk-a-mile-in-her-shoes.blogspot.com or 383-5545
Sat May 5th	Kenya Benefit - Salt Spring Island - Stories, Songs and Images The Gatehouse, 190 Reynolds Rd 2pm Suggested: \$15 Info 240-653-9485
Sat May 5th	Calgary Multicultural Choir and the Victoria Harmony Choir @ Victoria Edelweiss Club, 108 Niagara 8 pm, \$13, 479-3396
Sun May 6th	Victoria Street Newz Community Gathering -- to talk about the past, present, and future of the Newz. All Welcome, 11-3, Fernwood Comm Ctr.
Tues May 8th	Everyday=Earth Day Films-The Great Warming & Homeland: 4 Portraits of Native Action 7pm, Hermann's, 753 View \$5-10 res: opencinema.ca
May 8-10th	Dispute Resolution Compass Workshop - 812B Broughton Ave. Info: www.disputeresolution.bc.ca
May 9-13th	Intrepid Theatre: THE ADVENTURES OF ALI & ALI AND THE AXES OF EVIL - @ Metro Studio, 1411 Quadra, intrepidtheatre.com , 383-2663
Tues May 15th	Engaging Disability Community Book Club - Free, 7-9 pm, UVic's David Strong Bldg C108. Register:: 721-6297
Thurs May 17th	NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP , UVic's MacLaurin D116, 7 pm, \$2. Info: www.NPSG.ca or 595-5820
Thurs May 17	John Graham's Extradition Hearing , Vancouver Info: grahamdefense.org
May 23-26th	Building Co-operative Futures conference - Guelph, Ontario. Info: www.ontario.coop/BCF
May 23 - June 1st	Intrepid Theatre: 10th Annual UNO FESTIVAL! - @ the Metro Studio, 1411 Quadra (@ Johnson) intrepidtheatre.com , (250)383-2663
May 28th – June 3rd	Bike to Work Week Info: www.biketowork.ca
Wed May 30th	Fire in the Song: Religion, Ritual and Reconciliation , 12:30-2:30, Rm 105, Harry Hickman Bldg @ UVic, 721-8777 or dispute.resolution.uvic.ca
Thurs May 31st	Conflict - Uk Anarco Punk Legends w/rebel spell and ab irato - all ages, Tickets @ Dark Horse Books or Lyles Place (\$15 advance)
June 1-7th	Wild Earth Rendezvous - workshops, skills training, strategizing. Info: wildearth2007.blogspot.com
Sun June 3rd	Examining the Social Justice and Environmental Movements - 7:30 pm, Royal Theatre, Tickets \$19.50/15.00, (250) 386-6121
Sun June 10th	80+ Groups to Protest Israeli Occupation (on 40th anniversary) Info: www.endtheoccupation.org
June 22-24th	Vancouver 9/11 Truth Conference - 9/11, Canada and the New World Order - Reclaiming Our Destiny www.v911truth.org/conference2007.html
July 15-21st	Victoria School of Writing - SUMMER SCHOOL Info: (250) 595-3000, www.victoriaschoolofwriting.org
Sept 7-9th	Victoria's 2nd Anarchist Bookfair - 11-6 pm, 749 Pandora St. Reg. now for tables, workshops. Info: www.myspace.com/victoriaanarchistbookfair
Aug 6-12th, 2008	Truth & Reconciliation Commission for the Middle East (TRCME) Project- Ending The Wars, Making The Peace , www.educationaid.net

Street Newz is now in its 4th year and we think it's time for a **Community Discussion** -- to talk about where we've been, where we're going, and how we've done so far.

If you're a Street Newz reader, writer, vendor, supporter, or friend, please feel free to join us --

May 6th, 11-3, at the Fernwood Community Centre

For info call 383-5166 ext 0137 or write to streetnewz@islandnet.com

Update from The Victoria Committee To End All Homelessness

Since our last report the committee has continued to press housing issues with City Hall. We have secured the presence of two homeless people on the Regional Housing Affordabilty Partnership Committee, and one of our reps was able to buttonhole the Minister of Housing and request him to have enabling legislation passed that will allow municipalities to expropriate abandoned buildings and convert them to Community Housing (the new buzzword for subsidized housing).

Everyone's welcome at the weekly meetings: Wednesdays, 7-9 pm, Silver Threads.

For info: victoria@communitysolidarity.org, 812-1099

SAYING ‘NO!’ TO FLYERS, JUNK MAIL -- AND SPY WARE

Help reduce flyers and save the environment – stop spam and spy ware to boot!

by Rodney Graham

Winnipeg MB --Would you like to put an end to the annoying pile of waste paper dumped into your mailbox everyday? It’s easy to do. You can actually reduce most of it. How about the irritating advertising in your e-mail inbox, and the lurking ever-present spyware? That too can be eradicated –mostly anyway.

Junk mail and Flyers

Over the years I’ve seen an increasing rise in hostility focused at spam e-mail, but the annoyance and environmental menace most irritating and ecologically harmful is still that of flyers and junk mail. Many had hoped that the technological form of advertising through the Internet would reduce the waste of paper. That didn’t happen. Actually, it increased the waste of paper.

Over the past ten years there have been dozens of ‘anti-junk mail’ campaigns across Canada -- Most local and lead by small groups of activists or just community groups in municipalities in Canada. A lot more environmental groups collected information because the public had contacted them and they dolled out info on how the citizenry could counteract the problem.

Then there were a very small number of full-scale campaigns designed to combat the phenomenon and usually full time environmental activists in Canada directed these campaigns. I helped coordinate a local anti-junk mail campaign in Winnipeg in the early nineties. We were just a few Earth First people and local residents of the Wolseley district. But we gathered a lot of information over the years and sent in a lot of petitions asking for legislation to reduce the waste. In Waterloo Ontario in the early nineties there was a good campaign put together and school children went door-to-door giving out “anti junk mail kits.”. The group was called “Mapletree” and has since disbanded but they managed to send several of their kits to other schools across Canada.

In my experience with the no flyer movement I have seen some of the best artwork in the country on mail boxes – No flyer signs made of ceramics, wood, plastic, home made ones, store bought ones – some were made by kids with crayons. One of the most interesting one I’ve seen was made by a stone mason in Winnipeg who lived near the cemetery he worked at, it was chiselled of the same material as a tomb stone and shaped like one too! It said in big letters, ‘Herein lays the SOB who had the nerve to put flyers in my mailbox – NO FLYERS PLEASE!’

Environmental aspect

Flyers, or circulars, as they are called in Europe, are big business. It is also the cheapest form of advertising. But according to many environmentalists the form of advertising is extremely wasteful as businesses consider that if only 2% of their hooks are gone for they consider it successful. On average we spend an entire six months of our lives just reading flyers while they are being transported from the mail box to the garbage can or recycling bin. But according to businesses that distribute flyers most people actually use the flyers, so they are not really wasted at all. But according to environmentalists far less of the flyers are used than what distributors claim. The problem is that there has not been a great deal of studying done – objectively, that is.

Different ads are delivered to different neighbourhoods in Canada based on research gleaned from polls conducted by organisations like Stats Canada. Whether or not big bucks were invested in the flyers on your doorstep, their contents have been modified according to your postal code. If the business seeking out consumers with flyers and their product is cereal with a children’s theme in it like chocolate dinosaurs, for example, the business would try to find a neighbourhood with lots of young children with parents who have a middle to high income level. Interestingly, that’s why you won’t find many “goodies” in mailboxes in poorer neighbourhoods too. Little snacks like miniature candy bars, cookies, cereal, and even shampoo are more likely to be “given” in the more affluent areas -- where the money is.

Although distributors of flyers in Canada claim that not many people put up a no flyer sign, activists don’t agree, saying that most people don’t want flyers but merely put up with them thinking there is little they can do about it anyway. My own personal experience has been that of seeing a hell of a lot of no flyers signs -- and all across Canada too!

But, although there have been many ‘no flyer campaigns’ across Canada, the stickers are not distributed by activists with the fervour that the flyers are circulated by distributors. Activists have many other issues to work on and most homeowners do as well. In spite of the fact that there have been so many campaigns launched by schools, activist groups, and even neighbourhood groups, the problem is that they usually fizzle out. But businesses are more motivated regarding the issue, the motive of course is money, and they have found that distributing flyers is a cheap way to advertise. So it’s not going away soon...

Most large cities have upwards of 100,000 flyers distributed in their respective cities annually, and the consternation over the waste among environmentalists is growing. Studies by environmentalist have shown that



landfills across Canada are filled with 1/3 flyers or even as high as 40%! – And that is by weight! Flyers are also the fastest growing element in landfills in Canada and the United States. The number of flyers and junk mail are regularly doubling each year. Considering that we spend over a billion dollars yearly on waste management, that means over three hundred million dollars are spent looking after flyers that environmentalists say are only used by perhaps one quarter of the homes where they were placed. In view of this -- it is unquestionably a monumental waste.

Solutions on the horizon

Even though adherents of flyers claim that most flyers can be recycled, no large-scale study has been conducted nation wide. The waste is potentially gargantuan – Flyers that are clay bases are very hard if not impossible to recycle. These are flyers that are shinny and glossy. Flyers containing colourful inks are not recyclable either. Nor are envelopes with ‘windows’ in them. Tony Kulak, of Waste management in Winnipeg once told me that ‘...if you dig up newspapers 10 years after they’ve been buried you can still read them.’-- So much for recyclability. Most newsprint is not recycled – in spite of what you may be told by bureaucrats and do-gooders. Many merchants just cut the date and info off the top front cover and throw the rest in the garbage at the end of each day.

Environmentalists will agree that the big trend in recycling is waning fast. Why? Because over the past ten years they’ve proven that recycling has just been the biggest excuse to produce and waste more in our culture. The “Recycling Council of Manitoba,” an environmental organization, even changed its name to the “Waste Management Council of Manitoba”. ... Kind of amusing. Although recycling needs to continue – reduction is the most important of all -- Worldwide.

How to get rid of flyers

Put up a NO FLYER sign. This can be a handwritten notice or store-bought sign. Effective July 2, 1997, Canada Post Corporation announced that it would begin respecting consumers’ choice not to receive unaddressed materials (junk mail). That is due in part to the good folks at C.U.P.W. who had the good conscience to support environmental concerns directed at the issue. Unfortunately, however, Canada Post is guilty of only 23% of flyer delivery in Canada. 50% comes in your newspaper each day. The rest comes from private distributors delivering it door-to-door who are not under Canada Post’s guidelines.

If you still get flyers even though you’ve posted a sign simply obtain the phone number from the bag or material delivered and call the distributor and ask to be put on a deletion list. They will almost certainly obey your request if you contact the distributor directly, after all they don’t want to lose business through bad relations with the public. You don’t have to go to a specialty store to obtain a ‘no flyers’ sticker because most hardware stores have them. Apparently the retailers have seen the need for them since hardware stores have stocked them for decades! The best are plastic or metal because they last forever and generally only cost a couple of dollars each.

Some of the funkier ones can be found in specialty stores. There’s a little company in Edmonton called Told and Retold -- they make real funky painted ceramic no flyer signs that hang neatly from your mailbox. They set up at the Farmer’s Market each weekend.

To address the issue of ‘junk mail’ -- delivered because you are on a mailing list or lists: Contact the Canadian Direct Marketing Association and ask that your name be removed from all mailing lists. Up to 80% of junk mail originates through DMA and their lists of residents across Canada. You may need to repeat the process every year, particularly if you have subscribed to something new in the past year. Canadian Direct Marketing Association: Stn. E - 607 #1 Concord Gate Don Mills, Ontario M3C 3N6. They’re at www.cdma.org. You can apply to their online “no contact” service. The phone number for DMA is: 1-416-391-2326.

Canada Post also has a toll free number: 1-800-267-1177. They will give you instructions over the phone on how to stop flyers and junk mail in your area.

If you want to do just a little more.... if you get ‘junk mail’ that has your name on it, check to see if it has a return envelope. Stuff it full of flyers and junk mail so it’s as big as a coconut and tape it together and drop it in a mailbox. The sender will have to pay for the extra postage. If nothing else, you’ll get a chuckle out of it and enjoy the cathartics.

Write a letter to your M.L.A. and M.P. asking that legislation be implemented to reduce the waste of our natural resources. A little note is in order here too. Many people earn a very low wage delivering flyers. The subject of exploitation has been discussed among politicians and activists for years. Of course politicians being what they are – have stalled talks for decades. The wages are far below sub standard and should be much higher. The weapon of “saving jobs” for opponents of anti junk mail crusaders is moot. They use that one during the seal puppy killing too. Flyers and the work for those who carry them will not diminish any time soon anyway.

In June’s Street Newz -- SPAM and Spyware

Rodney Graham is a freelance journalist/activist living in Winnipeg Manitoba. You can write to Rod at streetsheetcda@hotmail.com.

On 18 April 2007 - B.C.’s future went on trial

by BC Mary

On Wednesday 18 April 2007, lawyers for Dave Basi, Bobby Virk and Aneal Basi appeared in Vancouver Supreme Court, 3 years after police raided their clients’ offices in the B.C. Legislature. Following difficult pre-trial procedures, the three accused will appear for trial. They will swear to tell the truth (the whole truth) about the charges against them (accepting bribes, influence peddling, breach of trust, fraud, when they were high level aides to the Minister of Finance and Minister of Transportation).

The shocking police raid on 28 December 2003 was one of the most sensational events in British Columbia’s political history.

The outcome may be equally sensational.

If only British Columbia had a free, fair media, the public would know that the sale of Canada’s 3rd largest railway (B.C. Rail) might possibly have been criminally influenced. We’d be able to decide for ourselves if an assistant could make or break a billion-dollar transaction without higher authority. We’d know whether or not to expect compensation for losing our railway -- or -- whether we might get B.C. Rail back again. At very least, we’d have a better idea of the challenges and temptations of running a government.

But Big Media has let the public down.

There’s no denying that the Basi, Virk, Basi Trial is important. It’s the B.C. government’s privatization process on trial. It’s the Campbell government’s method of doing business, on trial. In many ways, it’s British Columbia’s future which will be on trial.

This is so important that Citizens have become Journalists to report news of this event. Some citizens attend the pre-trial hearings and report in depth on what they see and hear. Others have developed the On-Line web-sites where this specific B.C. Rail Trial information is made available to the public. My web-site is: bctrialofbasi-virk.blogspot.com

It all started on 18 April 2007. Good luck, British Columbia.

OLYMPIC FEVER !!

by helen michell

This is a most devastating situation in this rich country. In an area that is hosting the world famous 2010 Olympics, Vancouver B.C. Canada, homelessness should be a first priority, to be taken care of. Yet it is being swept under the rug, so the rich can once again throw a huge party in our back yard.

Homelessness is not the only dirty issue around here. Dirty water, shortage of water, animals have also become homeless. My immediate family members are also homeless. Many of my own family has had to sleep in the back alleys, in old abandoned cars, or spend their nights in other peoples, overcrowded homes. Many cannot find work, as a result of vast discrimination and racism.

Indigenous women, have had the worst problems of all. They face the harshest discrimination and racism, than any other race. When indigenous women suffer, than the whole family suffers, or their families disintigrate forever. This illegal Treaty Process is much to blame for displaced indigenous families.

You can’t hide homelessness by moving the homeless people, into another town. There is still no jobs, and no homes anywhere, in this province. Poor families are becoming poorer. Food is so high priced also. Gas is expensive. Rent is expensive. Living is expensive.

Still many more poor indigenous people, are being processed through the injustice system, and the prisons are filled to capacity, with humans. Building more mental institutes will not stop the problems.

What we need is a better social services system. We need the federal and provincial governments to stop taking monies away from the poor, and giving it to the Olympics of 2010. We need to take the discrimination and racism out of the police system, the welfare system, the housing system, and the justice system. We need to stop incriminating the poor indigenous peoples of this province.

Global Warming vs Economic Growth and Free Trade

by Sue Hiscocks and Jim Wight (AboutClimateChange.com)

Economists shudder when they hear about limiting growth. Well here we are with Global Warming smack in our faces. We are told that we need to get our food locally and stop shipping stuff all over the world. The question now must be asked. Does economic growth trump Global Warming or does Global Warming trump Economic growth? Is there really any choice?

We use fossil fuels to create inland irrigation and maintain fish farms. The fish farms are to produce meal for animal use and to ship expensive white table cloth fish to the rest of the world. Eighty percent of the fish farm product is exported. Should we be importing labour so we can ship to the rest of the world? This means more stress on our environment. Our fisheries are a mere shadow of itself and commercial fishing where it is “every man for himself” will soon cause extinction of the fisheries.

Contamination of the wild stocks by fish farms is further adding to the problem. It used to be that Fishing licences were for a specific area of a river. In that scenario fishermen looked after the fishery and made sure it wasn’t over fished. Native chiefs used to be responsible for the sustainable harvest of fish. Since the liberals opened it up for any number of fishermen to fish wherever they wanted the sustainable approach has been destroyed. The fishing industry uses 50 billion liters of fuel/yr.

Offshore aquaculture is expensive. Governments are now beginning to zone the continental shelf for privatization and investment. Four of five fish farms here are owned by foreign interests. We should return the fish industry back to the way it was supply only local demand. We will all need to live on food that can be grown locally and forget about unlimited growth to supply the rest of the world. To compensate the economic loss we need to produce more at home instead of importing.....down with NAFTA.

It is one thing to throw money at expensive research that won’t be realized til it is way too late. It is another to cap our emissions and reduce the fossil fuel use to a minimum. There are a multitude of things that can be done to reduce greenhouse gas other than throwing money at the problem.

LATEST BUDGET BLIND TO HUMAN NEEDS

by Gerry Masuda

The latest Conservative budget illustrates the fact that our political system is blind to basic human needs.

This budget was highly crafted to give tax cuts to those groups which would contribute to a Conservative victory in the pending elections. All significant target groups got some tax concession with emphasis and publicity on families with children. The forecasted federal budget surplus was also used to appeal to these targeted groups.

But what is the meaning of a budget surplus when there are unmet human needs?

The traditional groups are once again ignored. These includes the working poor, the poor, the handicapped, and aboriginals. From an election and budget viewpoint, these groups do not count since they traditionally don’t vote. Yet these groupings represent a growing percentage of our population. Many elections in BC are won by narrow margins. An organized ‘block voting’ by the self-organized poor could swing elections and force politicians to start considering these neglected groups and their basic human needs.

If you belong to one of these ‘neglected’ groups, consider self-organizing to get a fair share of government revenues. You have to self-organize to register and then block vote to demonstrate the powers of your numbers.

Robert Arnold in the February issue of Victoria Street Newz (page 7) is starting up the Anti-Poverty Electors to do exactly this. If you fall into these neglected groups or wish to help these groups, contact Robert at 595-6871 or email him at greynight@shaw.ca.

The Homeless Ladder

by Derek Skinner

The sad plight of those trapped in the misery of poverty and homelessness can be represented as a ladder.

At the bottom of the ladder are the mentally and physically challenged, the drug addicts and those in the grip of depression who no longer have the will to improve themselves.

These are the inhabitants of Streetlink, Our Place, Open Door and various church basements that provide a mat and floor space. They feed in soup kitchens provided by voluntary helpers and food donated by restaurants and grocery stores. Many do not have welfare or disability allowances and exist by panhandling. There are several hundred of these individuals.

Mixed in with them are some sharks and irresponsible sociopaths that live to beat the system. They have possibly plausible stories as camouflage.

Above them are the ones lucky enough to be provided with safe supported housing including detox beds and recovery beds provided by the B.C. Housing Authority and run by the CoolAid Society and others. They have 24/7 medical and other support services. These are the people who have undertaken to try to improve themselves and get back into society’s mainstream by working if possible and being responsible for themselves.

Between Victoria and Langford, CoolAid provides for some 200 individuals in half a dozen locations.

Above these are the uncounted numbers that couchsurf with friends or live with family or in cars because they do not earn enough to afford a rental unit. They are generally in minimum wage jobs and include single mother families, sex trade workers, itinerant and young workers etc.

At the top of the ladder are those who have qualified for assisted housing. The numbers on the waiting list are large and the new supply of housing units almost nil.

Therein lies the bottleneck that prevents a workable solution to the whole mess. We need to move people up the ladder rather than providing stopgap temporary bandaids to each level of crisis as it occurs.

The housing market is currently so hot and profitable that very few developers are interested in providing low cost housing at minimum profit.

The Provincial Government in B.C. is corporate rather than society oriented and has minimized its investment in low cost housing and the Housing Authority subsidies for detox and recovery beds. One possible low cost solution would be to provide supervised bunkhouse style camps with communal kitchen and laundry but the NIMBY factor is very strong.

The Federal government has sold its soul to the private banks and cannot afford to promote a National Housing Policy. Without corporate or senior Government investment the Municipalities have to deal with the bulk of the costs of providing for the homeless at the bottom of the ladder and rely on the volunteers and goodwill and donations from local citizens.

Providing funding is not the only need but it would enable the bureaucracies already in place to do what they have to do.

Providing funding is easy. The statistics and unit costs are known. All it takes is for the Federal Government to summon the will to use the existing mandate for the Bank of Canada to provide interest free money for a National Housing Policy and enable the Provincial Governments to fund their Housing Authorities. The savings in the Health Care and police systems alone would probably cancel out the costs. When the truly sick and incompetent have been moved up the ladder the remaining residue of the criminal and irresponsible can be dealt with by the police and court systems.

The governments could then honestly take the credit for turning the ladder of misery into an Up escalator of hope and eliminating the national disgrace of the homeless problem in one of the richest countries in the world.



MP Denise Savoie Responds to Federal Budget

The lack of any mention of homelessness in the new federal budget shows that the Conservative government is completely out of touch with the needs and priorities of Victorians, says NDP MP Denise Savoie (Victoria).

“I can hardly believe it,” Savoie said. “But I’ve searched the whole Budget 2007 plan, and the word ‘homeless’ does not appear. Given everything that’s happened in our region around that issue this year - the debates, the forums, the extreme weather, the protests and calls for action, that’s really incredible. What will it take to make the Stephen Harper’s Conservatives listen to local priorities?”

Savoie said she was also dismayed to hear Conservative cabinet minister Gary Lunn, who is also the MP for Saanich-Gulf Islands, dodge the issue while being interviewed on local radio.

“When asked why there was a lack of money for housing in this budget, Gary Lunn said it was a question of priorities,” Savoie pointed out. “That’s inexcusable. But at least we know where his government stands. I guess helping the most vulnerable and funding programs that would create long-term, stable housing options to assist the homeless just does not make the list of Conservative priorities. Instead they chose to increase tax breaks for corporations.”

The NDP, by contrast, have made addressing the widening prosperity gap one of their top priorities. In the 2005 budget, the NDP secured an amendment that diverted \$1.4 billion from corporate tax cuts to social housing.

For more information or to book interviews:
Ed Gillis - 613-947-4424 or Karen Sawatzky - 250-363-8421

**Hare Krishna,
Save My Sorry Ass**

I'm addicted to form,
Yes, besotted by form.
Oh, alack and alas!
Krishna, please save my ass!

I'm addicted to form,
Want to SEE God in form,
And I'm pissed and I'm torn
And devoutly forlorn.

I am filled with dismay --
For the Sages all say
That the Truth ain't in form,
Nor the ass ever born.

Nadhia Sutara

Street Muzings

Mistakes and All



In life we struggle on
Beyond mistakes and tears
and shouts and screams
Slip through lonely nights
and fears



Look for peaks on Mountains
and the rising of the sun
Catch our breath in quiet
and dry our eyes
with childhood dreams

Search for our lover's smile
in the lifting of the veil
and the disappearing mist

And this is how life
and all new days
again begin

sebastian alexander (1962 - 2007)

Sebastian was a student at UVic during the early 1990s. He passed away from a heart attack March 15th in China.



**Homelessness, suicide
and the ministry**

This poem was written for my 5 children: Cayla, Brandon, Alexis, Richard, and Patricia.

"But the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act was written to protect us from situations just like this! And, if you read the Child and Family Community Service Act, you'll find these laws exist despite the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act."

I was so pissed off that I didn't care if I was talking to the area manager for the Ministry of Children and Families or not. I was like, "These laws were meant to protect adults and children alike. How careless of you not to follow the law when it comes to the safety of a child. Social workers are supposed to be supporting families during times of stress yet you are putting children at risk of harm and that is never right. I haven't seen my five children in over a year because of your decision to put them in an abusive home."

For four years I've had to listen to my children's cries from a distance and in that time I've seen plenty of damage done not only to my children. 21% of children in care in the last ten years killed themselves. Out of the 10,000 children currently in care, how many will kill themselves this year? How many will turn 19 and contribute to the homeless population? How many will turn to drugs and alcohol?

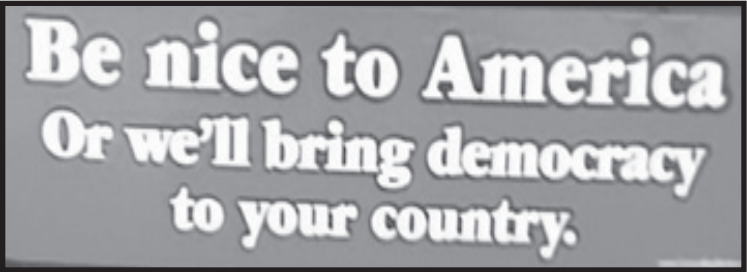
I woke up Saturday morning after listening to all the drunken/drug-induced fights all night. I looked out the window and saw the coroner getting out of her vehicle. Oh God, I thought. I hope that wasn't the 20 year old meth addict. I hope that wasn't one of the teenage crack addicts from upstairs or the 40 year old alcoholic with one kidney, or the 42 year old alcoholic/morphine addict or the 45 year old heroine/cocaine/morphine/T#3 addict.

The one thing all these people have in common is how the Ministry of Children and Families affected their lives.

Colleen Rae Dunphy, RN

They hang the man and flog the woman
That steal the goose from off the common,
But let the greater villain loose
That steals the common from the goose.
The law locks up the man or woman
Who steals the goose
from off the common,
And geese will still a common lack
Till they go and steal it back.

*English folk poem, circa 1764
(thanks to June Ross for sending it)*



Where The Streets Have No Fame

Where the streets have no fame
It's always the same
No one has got a name
It's just: Hey You
Hey you
Hey you
Or the: Are you looking?
Want up town?
Want down town?
Better to just walk again
Keep the face intact
Like some egg on a silk tightrope
You'll be asked the same all over again
All over again the same
Questions
From the corner.
The only
Street with a name
Is the corner
In the tight turn and steel stop of a police van
Officer Ubiquitous
Strolls the screen
Harbouring secrets
Red Flags
It's always the same
Where the streets have no fame
The tameness of daylight
Gets maimed in the dying of light
When the skull of imagination
Is plain hurt when the brain hits back
With thinking - thinking ...
Even the bamboozler grieves
While the court courtesans
Count the tickets
Wrapping their hand
In the slow twist of hair round their finger.

© Paul Burnside, March 07

omphalos

tentacles of evaporation race
off my hand up
thru the holes in the rubber palm
soaked all the way to the short hairs
cold and sore
and no where near the end
as the rain picks up the pace
and i go heels over hips
with arm-full of brush
breaking my fall
with the back of my head
poverty has placed me here
the fault is all my own
bedazzled and exhausted
i'm braced against the deck post, braced
against the steep grade and the mush
of slush ground cover
the always and forever fucking rain
steadied with speckled boulders
and the knowledge that another slip
could drive me out of the earnings
i slowly re-take the task at hand
dreadful as i anchor my rubbered sole
and disappear into the sawdust
and up
my own belly-button.

j. fisher



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Rob Fleming, MLA
Victoria - Hillside



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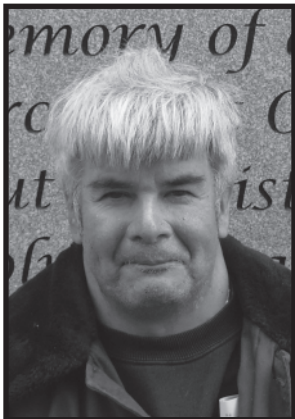
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Thanks to these Generous Supporters!!



thanks for the work you are doing it's people like you that make it worthwhile (or able) for me to go on
anonymous

Bean Counting	Feb	Mar	Apr
Operating Revenue			
Coordinator's Revenue			
Paper Sales (from vendors)	500.00	675.00	650.00
Donations	281.00	20.00	560.00
Salary from B & R	650.00	650.00	700.00
Pennies from Panhandlers	10.00	0.00	0.00
Total Coordinator's Revenue	1441.00	1345.00	1910.00
B&R Revenue (deposited)			
Advertising	0.00	125.00	0.00
Donations	870.00	65.00	50.00
Subscriptions	105.00	60.00	35.00
Grant Monies	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total B&R Rev. (deposited)	975.00	250.00	85.00
Total Operating Revenue	1441.00	1345.00	1910.00
Operating Expenses			
Coordinator's Expenses			
Paper & Printing Costs	573.04	602.19	602.19
Office expenses	27.00	0.00	36.00
Misc. (postage, fees, etc.)	20.17	62.96	78.75
Community reciprocity	75.00	50.00	165.00
Total Coordinator's Expenses	695.21	715.15	881.94
B & R Expenses			
Bus Tickets (2 for 1)	35.00	35.00	40.50
fm City of Vic Grant	100.00	100.00	150.00
fm KAIROS Grant	50.00	250.00	250.00
fm PSAC Grant	50.00	200.00	200.00
fm B & R reserves	450.00	100.00	100.00
for B & R cheques	0.00	0.00	46.27
sub ttl B&R Expenses	685.00	685.00	786.77
Total Operating Expenses	1380.21	1400.15	1668.71
Ttl Coord Rev minus Expenses (- is out of pocket, + is salary)	60.79	-55.15	241.29
Bread & Roses Balance	5334.94	3995.26	4044.14

A Gigantic Huge Thank You !!

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And anyone else I may have missed -
Thanks!! It wouldn't be the same without you!!

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